

✠ ORDER OF SERVICE ✠

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

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SERVICE OF THE WORD

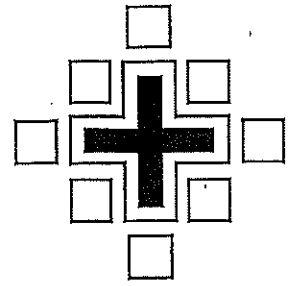
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Third Sunday in Advent

December 17, 2023



INTROIT *Ps. 85:8–9, 12–13; antiphon: Ps. 85:7*

Show us your steadfast love, | O LORD,*
and grant us your sal- | vation.
Let me hear what God the | LORD will speak,*
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to | folly.
Surely his salvation is near to those who | fear him,*
that glory may dwell | in our land.
Yes, the LORD will give | what is good,*
and our land will yield its | increase.
Righteousness will go be- | fore him*
and make his foot- | steps a way.
Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.
Show us your steadfast love, | O LORD,*
and grant us your sal- | vation.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

GRADUAL *Zech. 9:9; Ps. 118:26, alt.*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of | Zion.*
Shout aloud, O daughter of Je- | rusalem.
Behold, your king is com- | ing to you,*
righteous and having sal- | vation.
Blessèd is he who comes in the name | of the Lord.*
From the house of the Lord we | bless you.

DAILY READINGS

December 17: Is. 33:1–24; Rev. 5:1–14; 18: Is. 34:1–2, 8–35:10; Rev. 6:1–17; 19: Is. 40:1–17; Rev. 7:1–17;
20: Is. 40:18–41:10; Rev. 8:1–13; 21: Is. 42:1–25; Rev. 9:1–12; 22: Is. 43:1–24; Rev. 9:13–10:11; 23: Is.
43:25–44:20; Rev. 11:1–19.

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Old Testament Reading:

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

- ¹ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the
brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those
who are bound;
- ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
- ³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress
instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint
spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that he may be
glorified.
- ⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former
devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many
generations. . . .
- ⁸ For I the LORD love justice;
I hate robbery and wrong;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant
with them.
- ⁹ Their offspring shall be known among the
nations,
and their descendants in the midst of the
peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge them,
that they are an offspring the LORD has
blessed.
- ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;
my soul shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of
salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of
righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest
with a beautiful headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her
jewels.

- ¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it
to sprout up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness
and praise
to sprout up before all the nations.

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing,
¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this
is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise
prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast
what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of
evil.

²³Now may the God of peace himself
sanctify you completely, and may your whole
spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who
calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Holy Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose
name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear
witness about the light, that all might believe
through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came
to bear witness about the light. . . .

¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the
Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem
to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed,
and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the
Christ." ²¹And they asked him, "What then?
Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are
you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."
²²So they said to him, "Who are you? We need
to give an answer to those who sent us. What
do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the
prophet Isaiah said."

²⁴(Now they had been sent from the
Pharisees.) ²⁵They asked him, "Then why are
you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ,
nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶John answered
them, "I baptize with water, but among you
stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who
comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am
not worthy to untie." ²⁸These things took place
in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was
baptizing.